

A Cup of Cold Water

Multi-tasking is a popular concept nowadays, but I'll admit this is not my preferred way to do my work. My ideal is to choose a chore, and then plow ahead with bulldog tenacity until I complete it. For mothers, particularly the mothers of young children, this method of doing things is seldom an option, however, and frustration often mounts. I was definitely feeling frustrated one day, when I believe the Lord taught me a very pointed lesson about my expectations versus God's expectations regarding service to others. I believe I was wiping the kitchen counters, and I remember saying to myself, "I am going to finish this job, so if anyone comes up to me needing anything, they're just going to have to wait!" It was then that one of my girls came up to me and said, "Mommy, can I have a cup of cold water?" I was stunned, and quickly gave her what she had asked for.

I need to explain. In our household, this isn't the normal way this request would be phrased. More typically my little girls would have said, "May I have glass (not a cup) of water?" and no mention would have been made as to its temperature. I believe that day the Lord wanted to bring to my mind a specific verse, and to teach me an important lesson regarding a selfish attitude I had begun to develop. Of course, the verse I felt that God brought to my mind that day was Matthew 10:42 – "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

I got the message loud and clear – service to people, no matter how inconvenient it might seem to me and to my goals for that particular day, is service to God. He puts a premium on meeting the physical needs of people. These must be met before their spiritual needs can be tended to. This is borne out in James 2:15 and 16 – "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

Some time ago I read and enjoyed a biography of Amy Carmichael, missionary to India. Shortly after arriving in India, she was horrified to discover the practice of poor parents selling their daughters to the Hindu temples for temple service. The parents had no idea the "temple service" included all types of abuse. So she and a band of women set about rescuing all the baby girls they could. Before long, they had quite a large group of children to care for. When letters arrived from sponsoring churches in England asking for tallies of souls saved, Amy had no glowing reports to give them. She and her helpers were quite busy caring for the many needs of small children. I still remember what she said in response to one of the letters, words to the effect she had found that peoples' souls are firmly housed in physical bodies. Although this was not part of her original plan for evangelizing India, God had other plans for her, and she and her fellow workers were wise enough to submit to these plans.

May God help us not to miss all the areas of service He has for us. For mothers, this involves large amounts of time doing mundane tasks for our families. May we not lose sight of the fact that in these small, ordinary duties, we're serving God in big, important ways.